

powerful party in both Church and Parliament to oppose arbitrary methods and encounter persecution more stoutly than ever.

The policy of enforcing with severe penalties conformity in small matters was one of very questionable wisdom. It gave rise to controversy and persecution within the Protestant Church at a time when the menace of a popish restoration was by no means the mere ideal of a disloyal faction. It was, to say the least, a mistake in policy to pursue a course fitted to estrange the supporters of the Protestant cause when the very existence of Protestantism was more than once in jeopardy. It was this argument that Bacon urged in vain in his "Advertisement touching the Controversies of the Church of England" (1589). Conformity and intolerance might be in keeping with the spirit of the age, but the impolicy, let alone the injustice, of subjecting men to illegal trials and harsh penalties, for a difference of opinion in matters essentially indifferent, was reprobated by Elizabeth's most sagacious advisers. Cecil and Walsingham, Leicester and Knollys, Mildmay and Smith, strove to mitigate the growing resentment and check the arbitrary methods of the High Commission. Unfortunately, the Puritans did their best to frustrate the good offices of their friends in high places. They not only stickled at the surplice, they carried the controversy into the domain of Church government, and by their hostility to the episcopal constitution of the Church gave their opponents a pretext for harsh and arbitrary measures, and made it difficult for their patrons to protect them. According to the historians, the Puritan demand for a presbyterian system of Church government was an impossible one. An ecclesiastical democracy "could not/ according to Mr Gardiner, " flourish on English soil. England has been Papal, Episcopal, Liberal; she has shouted by turns for the authority of Rome, for the Royal Supremacy, and for the Rights of Conscience. One thing she has strictly avoided ; she has "never been, and it may be affirmed without fear of contradiction that she never will be, Presbyterian." Mr Gardiner in this sweeping judgment has apparently overlooked the petition of the House of Commons in 1584, To judge from this document, the majority of the Commons were prepared at least to engraft